I: Good afternoon and thank you very much for taking the time to help me with my bachelor's thesis research paper. I want to start by giving you some legal information regarding data protection.The treatment of all the information collected during this interview is anonymous. The information will be stored under a pseudonym and will be used exclusively for my thesis study. I need you to sign the data consent within the protocols of the university that I'm serving my bachelor's thesis. This interview has neither any benefit nor risk to you and you can leave it at any time. I would also like to ask for your consent to record this conversation as it would make it easier for me to analyze the data later and I will also be taking some notes during our conversation. Is that okay with you?

R8: Yes it is.

I: Okay so this interview is a study about the perceptions of sustainability in the eyes of consumers specifically within the food packaging industry. There are no right or wrong answers so we ask you to be as honest and objective as you can. Again rest assured that the contents of the interview are anonymous and used only for my thesis paper. Do we have any questions before we start?

R8: I do not.

I: Great so the first question is how would you personally define sustainability?

R8: So anytime I think of sustainability I always think of being environmentally friendly I say and so with sustainability I often think that it relates to the impact that you have on the earth currently and also for the future.

I: And what to what extent would you say that you're concerned about environmental issues and are you taking any action in your daily routine to contribute to environmental sustainability?

R8: I would say I'm definitely concerned about it to a certain extent. I won't say that I'm concerned that to the point where I make everything in my life having to do with sustainability, but I definitely do try to avoid certain things when I have the opportunity such as reducing like the amount of water that I use, the amount of energy I use in the house by switching off electricity when I'm not in the room or something like that. So my family has a garden in the backyard so we compost very frequently with that garden and then obviously we're growing our own food so that's a little bit sustainable as well.

I: Perfect. What do you care about when you buy packaged goods? So what do you pay attention to for example any colors, visuals, packaging materials, any of those kinds of things that you pay attention to?

R8: Yes, so I would pay attention to colors and just how visually appealing it looks to me. So things that you know have clean packaging in the sense that it's very aesthetically pleasing to the eye. So oftentimes when it has green packaging it just looks better to me. You know

they always have like the little leaves on the side to show that it's like sustainable and stuff. Those always catch my eye.

I: Perfect. And are there any like packaging materials that you think that you're more drawn to?

R8: I'm not sure if there's a specific packaging that I get drawn to a lot but I do like when things are packaged in like the cloth kind of like the where you can kind of tell it's reusable due to like the different fibers that are woven into the cloth material. But other than that I don't think there's a specific one.

I: Okay. What kind of packaged foods do you buy? Can you give me some examples of packaged goods that you've bought lately?

R8: Like food?

I: Yeah.

R8: I buy I guess like frozen food. So like frozen vegetables, some frozen packaging like frozen meals. And then I also buy fruit. So I'll get like the little I guess the plastic fruit packaging sometimes the little net fruit packaging. And then I let's see what else I bought recently. I've also bought oat milk. I buy that a lot. So I think that's a couple of the packagings I've bought recently.

I: Perfect. And among the products that you just mentioned have you noticed if any of them were sustainable products?

R8: I would say some of the fruit I buy are due to like it being more organic. I guess like not having pesticides used on them. And then also the oat milk I think is a more sustainable form of milk than cow's milk is at least in America. I think also some of the packaging has been made from reused like plastic and stuff like that. So other than that I can't think of anything else.

I: That's perfect. So how do you assess if a product is environmentally sustainable or green? So if you looked at a product what criteria would you use to say that this was sustainable?

R8: I would definitely see if it was like reusable. So if it's something that I can buy over and over again I would say that would be sustainable. The other thing is if it was made by recycled products. So I know that there's like some pencils that you can get that are recycled. So sometimes I look at stuff like that. And then also the energy that's being used for creating the product. So like I mentioned with the oat milk where I think it uses less energy than regular milk does but I'm not completely 100% on that.

I: Great. And are there any like colors or visuals or anything that you think kind of make you feel like it's more sustainable?

R8: Yes. I feel like green and like brown so earth tones definitely make me think that it's more sustainable than if something's packaged in bright red for example.

I: Makes sense. And the last open-ended question I have is what elements of a product make you think it's eco-friendlier than another regardless of whether you buy it or not?

R8: Um definitely the I guess in my mind I think organic products are more eco-friendly than things that aren't organic. Again with the kind of the little like if they have like a little leaf symbol or something where it says eco-friendly recycled packages. Stuff like that.

I: Okay. So now I am going to show you a series of photos of a variety of packaged goods. Please classify each of them based on which one you believe is the most sustainable and I ask that you provide a brief explanation of why you feel this way about each. So I'm just going to share my screen. Okay. Can you see like photos?

R8: Yes.

I: Okay. I'm just going to make it bigger. Okay. So the first group is like the same brand and product but different packaging materials. So if you saw this, which of the three would you think was the most sustainable and why?

R8: Um I would think the most sustainable is uh the glass one which I'm assuming it's glass. Yeah. The furthest um to the left. Um so I assume that's the most sustainable just because I know that usually if I see something that's glass I would probably reuse it for something else in the future um probably to hold some other like uh sauce that I made or um even just to like put flowers in it in the future.

I: Perfect. Um what about these three?

R8: Um again I think I would go with the glass one again just because I can reuse it um even to paint or use as decoration.

I: Okay. Out of these three?

R8: Um I would say the one on the right which I'm assuming is the glass one again. Um and I again just because I can repurpose it.

I: Okay so the second group is different brands but the same packaging materials.So out of these three um which one would be the most sustainable to you?

R8: Um I would say the most sustainable would be the one on the left most side [Noosa] just because it looks like it's resealable um and so again I can reuse it in the future.

I: Okay any out of these three?

R8: Um I would say the most sustainable one would be the one on the furthest to the right [Minute Maid]. Um and I would just say that because it seems to me as if I don't know I think it's like I just see more green on it so my mind just goes to thinking that.

I: Perfect. Um out of these three?

R8: Um, I would say that the most reuse or sorry sustainable one would be the one on the left [Land O'Lakes]. Um and I think that's just because I see the words farmer owned on it so it just seems like it's more green in that sense.

I: Perfect. And then these three?

R8: Um I would say the most uh sustainable one for me looks like the one on the middle [Bonne Maman] because it just kind of looks more I guess um like homemade in a sense so it just looks like it's a more uh I don't know sustainable choice.

I: Makes sense. And then out of these three?

R8: Um I would say the one in the middle [Wheat Thins] just because it looks like it has more um little labels of kind of like oh it's 100% whole like whole grain um and then just more natural products than the ones on the sides.

I: Makes sense. And then these three?

R8: Um I would say for these three I would um choose the one on the right most [Seventh Generation]. Um and that's because it just looks like it's more natural because it has like the pictures of the little fruits and um it seems like a more simpler bottle.

I: Okay. And then the last group is different brands and different packaging materials so out of these three which one did you pick?

R8: I would probably choose the one on the left most [On The Border] because it looks like it's made out of glass um and again you can kind of reuse that packaging um over like the plastic packaging on the middle and the right side.

I: Makes sense. Out of these three?

R8: Um I would probably um I would probably actually choose the one in the middle [Honey Bunches of Oats] just because it seems like it's using the least amount of product um and that it would be recycled pretty easily.

I: Okay. And then these three?

R8: I think I would choose the one in the middle [Horizon Organic] just because it's organic and it's made out of cardboard so again I kind of feel like it would be recycled pretty easily.

I: Okay. These three?

R8: Um I think I would choose the one in the middle [Rise] because I'm assuming that's a can and I feel like cans are something that can be repurposed very easily um as well as recycled pretty easily.

I: Okay. And I think that was the last one so let me stop screen sharing and I just have one final question after seeing those. So did you perceive any kind of greenwashing from any of the brands that we reviewed today? And in case you're not familiar with greenwashing it's defined as intentionally misleading or deceiving consumers with false claims about a firm's environmental practices and impact. So based on the brands we saw did you think any of them were kind of trying to greenwash or intentionally make an impression of being more sustainable than they might be?

R8: I definitely do think that some of the brands were um greenwashing um especially because I also kind of mentioned I think um when I was going through that some of the brands had more labeling than the other ones so that seems to me as if they're just trying to give you more information to be like oh look like we have um for example what I said like 100% whole grain so it's like healthier cleaner um food versus something um I also think that it was greenwashing um where it was like a very simple kind of packaging where it kind of just showed like for example the I think it was the dish detergent where it was like just the fruits so I think uh companies definitely do greenwash especially in some of the brands that you should be.

I: Perfect uh thank you so much for helping me with my study I really appreciate your help.

R8: Yeah of course.